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Peeking At Peking

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GOOD NEWS! Mr. Mao Tse-tung and Mr. Chou En-lai, who now want to be our friends, have won the latest power struggle in China.

This was a tremendous victory for Mr. Nixon and a bitter defeat for Mrs. Mao Tse-tung. Mrs. Mao, as you know, is a very tough cookie and a leader of the "hardliners," who want to punch America in the nose.

We get all this inside stuff from our China watchers in Hong Kong, which is a good place to watch China from, because you can actually see it on a clear day.

Of course, our China watchers had just finished predicting China would hold its big Tenth Party Congress & Power struggle any day now when Peking announced it had been held the week before. But, sometimes, the weather in Hong Kong is lousy.

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MY OWN favorite China watcher is Mr. Blickswith. He watches China from Pierre, Iowa, which is as good a place as any. And what he's been watching is Mr. and Mrs. Mao at the breakfast table. Herewith his report.

Mr. Mao: Golly, that sure was a dandy Tenth Party Congress & Power Struggle we had, wasn't it?

Mrs. Mao: I was never so embarrassed in my life. How could you put me down in front of all those 1249 delegates? What's more, Mrs. Chou En-lai was wearing a brand new army cap. Really, the way that woman puts on airs.

Mr. Mao: We must march forward, united and vigorous with clean fingernails to . . .

Mrs. Mao: Don't quote your quotations at me. Furthermore, I don't see why you voted for the pro-Nixon ticket. Frankly, I wouldn't buy a used rickshaw from that man.

Mr. Mao: We must make friends with the Americans, who used to be our enemies, because they are making friends with the Russians, who used to be their enemies, because the Russians, who used to be our friends, are now our enemies. Besides, I kind of like Dick. He said we sure had a Great Wall here.

Mrs. Mao: Americans, Russians — they all look alike to me. If you have to make friends with someone, why not the Russians?

Mr. Mao: Never! They are revisionists! They are not good Communists!

Mrs. Mao: The Americans are better Communists?

Mr. Mao: Well, they're farther away.

Mrs. Mao: Not far enough. I hear that Henry Kissinger is coming back to freeload on us again. Why don't they ever invite us to their place?

Mr. Mao: He says that's why he's coming. I think I'll go. I want to tell Dick he's sure got a Grand Canyon there.

Mrs. Mao: I hear those White House dinners are terrible. An hour later . . .

Mr. Mao: Enough! Why can't you stand loyally behind your husband like Martha Mitchell?

Mrs. Mao: Go jump in a river. A lot you know. She and John aren't even speaking.

Mr. Mao (with a sigh): How did he ever luck into that?

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I CONGRATULATED Mr. Blickswith on his keen vision as a China watcher. But did he feel the subject was important? After all, every spouse knows a political argument at the breakfast table can start a fight.

"A fight, yes," said Blickswith proudly. "But World War III?"